



GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

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Land use management and energy efficiency are the main areas of USAID's climate change activities in Russia. The FOREST Project promotes sustainable forest management and the preservation of Russia's vast forests as an important buffer against climate change. In the energy sector, the ROLL program's energy efficiency activities are helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions, thereby mitigating climate change.

Background. Russia is blessed with an abundance of natural resources. It holds major reserves of oil, gas, and minerals. Vast forests – 22% of the earth's forested land – absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, serving as a “carbon sink” that is vital to global environmental balance. They are also the habitat for rare and important biodiversity. These natural resources are keys to much-needed economic growth, but exploitation and poorly planned economic development cause environmental problems that have extracted exorbitant costs.

USAID/Russia's goal is to work in partnership with Russians to build a market-oriented and socially responsible democracy through the adoption and use of democratic norms, free-market mechanisms, and modern approaches to public health and child welfare. While USAID works at many levels of government and with many sectors of society, the ultimate customers and beneficiaries are the Russian people, with particular attention to the needs of women and youth.

Sector-Specific Climate Change Activities. USAID's Forest Resources and Technologies (FOREST) Project is designed to reduce the threat of global climate change by preserving Russian forests as a globally important carbon sink. FOREST's objectives are to:

- Preserve and expand Russia's carbon sink through more effective fire and pest management,
- Encourage more effective and innovative use of timber and non-timber forest resources to sustain forestry and to increase employment in the Russian Far East (RFE) and Siberia,
- Raise public awareness and take steps to change public behavior to reduce the number of anthropogenic forest fires in RFE and Siberia,
- Introduce and promote renewable biomass energy options as alternatives to conventional fuels.

The first objective, effective fire management, achieved its primary goal of institutionalization, defined as the transfer of skills, resources, and know-how to the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources. This will allow the Ministry to independently manage forest fire prevention public education campaigns. Additionally, the pheromone-based pest monitoring system developed by the project was handed off to the Ministry of Natural Resources to sustain.

In terms of its second objective, FOREST was able to create new work opportunities for minority populations in non-timber forest products – a traditional work area – with trade missions abroad and in western Russia.

To raise public awareness, FOREST developed and conducted a national forest fire prevention program for the general public that actively involved nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), mass media organizations, schools, educational institutions, groups of residents and indigenous tribes.

USAID's partners in climate change activities in Russia include*:

- Institute of Sustainable Communities (ISC)
- Winrock International
- Russian Ministry of Natural Resources
- Russian Ministry of Energy

* Because partners change as new activities arise, this list of partners is not comprehensive.

Finally, the FOREST project successfully demonstrated that biomass energy is a viable, cost-effective alternative for energy supply in the RFE and Siberia. Nine biomass energy facilities were installed in the RFE and another six are in the initial stages of development with a planned 50 megawatts of energy. USAID is assisting the Russian Ministry of Energy in replication of these technologies in projects implemented throughout Russia.

For its second phase, the FOREST Project has worked on reducing illegal logging practices in the RFE and implementing the FLEG (Forest Law Enforcement and Governance) process. Public hearings of the newly developed Forest Code were held in Khabarovsk Kray. Information campaigns about reforms in the forest sector, Forest Code development, illegal logging and FLEG reached over 30,000 people in the RFE. The draft of the newly developed Forest Code raised many disputes and negative reactions, because it restrains the rights of citizens in terms of forest utilization, and poses a threat to the existing system of specially protected forested territories. Illegal logging has become a common practice in Russia, damaging the forest ecosystem, as well as impacting revenues for the government.

Finally, USAID's Replication of Lessons Learned (ROLL) project is a Russia-wide grant-making activity aimed at improving natural resources management, environmental protection and public health. As a result of special ROLL grants on energy efficiency, the quality of communal services was improved in 32 cities, consumption of electricity decreased, and municipal budgets saved financing for other social programs, with a total savings of over US \$500,000. In 2005, ROLL implemented the Star Community Initiative (SCI) which benefited more than 600,000 people in 10 selected municipalities by reducing energy use, decreasing environmental pollution and saving US \$800,000 of the municipal budgets for other social needs.

For more information on Russia, visit
USAID/Russia's Website at:

<http://russia.usaid.gov>